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| **Unit 2** | **Class** | **Due** |
| **WEEK 4: February 1-5** | | |
| **M/T** | Exam 1, Reading groups | Unit 1 due on Bb. |
| **W/Th** | Style, Intro to Unit 2 – writing mediation argument, critical thinking | Read articles in your group, journal entry that works through ideas for your mediation paper |
| **WEEK 5: February 8-12** | | |
| **M/T** | GG, blind writing, researching | Reading done |
| **W/Th** | Style, proposals for Unit 3 | Vomit draft due |
| **WEEK 6: February 15-18** | | |
| **M/T** | GG, Thesis, outlining | Research and reading done, bring copies to class (digital on laptop is fine) |
| **W/Th** | Style, peer review | Draft for peer review |
| **WEEK 7: February 22-25** | | |
| **M/T** | Exam 2 | **Unit 2 due on Bb** |

# In a nutshell

* 8-10 page paper focusing on an issue involving one of the many ways that language mediates—the many ways we use language as a tool: in activities, within and between cultures, within discourse communities, in identity formation, and more
* More practice in rhetorical strategies
* Craft a mediated argument
* 6 or more sources, properly attributed in APA
* 200 points for this paper or 20% of your grade

# **Purpose**

The purpose of this paper is to explore the ways in which we use words to function as human beings, the myriad ways language use separates us from other life forms. In the first unit, we explored the idea that language and words are never static nor are their meanings universal; we shape the language we use. Now we will add to that understanding and look at how words and language shape us in turn. You will create a mediation argument, and you will get more practice working on logos, pathos, and ethos, and will practice APA as another style of citation as well. In this unit you will

* Explore issues of the intersections of language use and who we are as humans
* Get more practice with citations and works cited pages in APA
* Get more practice with argument strategies
* Work on improving your critical thinking through mediation

# The Readings

You will not just be randomly choosing a topic for discussion. Your exploration of how language affects us will be based on a set of readings, and from that group of readings, you will come up with your own topic. You may use the readings as part of your sources if they are applicable and helpful.

Based on what you learn from the readings, you will identify some kind of conflict that you would like to consider further. You may choose some kind of conflict that affects you personally or one that you are merely interested in knowing more about. Either one is fine. The idea of going through these readings is to give you a broad overview of one aspect of this very broad look at what is basically an issue of literacy: we are language users—literate beings—and we use language for nearly everything we do. From there, you can really go in any kind of direction you would as long as the focus is on the ways that language mediates—the ways we USE language.

The readings are divided into several sections. You should glance quickly through these sections to see what area of study interests you the most, and then read more in depth once you have chosen. While you are reading the articles in that section, keep a notebook to jot down any ideas that pop into your head. From there, you can begin to write a vomit draft.

For example, after reading Gloria Anzaldua’s essay from *Borderlands*, I might write about the “borderland” of being a writing professor and having many friends who just barely finished high school. Like connections between people, small details make connections. So although none of the readings specifically discuss this particular issue, they do discuss the idea of a “borderland” and being caught between two “cultures” when it comes to language, and I could easily pull from both readings in this category to discuss the conflict of how my language reflects who I am—how it *mediates* my identity. Simply put, the readings are to get you thinking, but don’t think of them as a box you must stay in but rather a box to begin in and jump from. You may use one or more of the readings, and you will need to find more articles and readings on your topic, whatever that may be. But the readings I provide are good ones, so keep in mind that you can use these articles as a source without using the whole thing.

# Specifics

1. As we go through the readings, you will want to carefully think about your own language life, as you may have done in your last unit for English 101. Your first choice will really be whether or not you want to write about something more personal or about others.
2. As you start to think about your topic, you also will need to keep in mind that you will be writing a mediation, which requires an in-depth understanding of multiple perspectives. If you are unable to consider the complexity of your issue, move to a new topic. However, often the very best papers come from a genuine desire to understand those who think differently than you do. If you have strong feelings about something and are overly bias, an excellent challenge is to really delve into understanding what you disagree with.
3. As before, you need to consider audience and purpose. Don’t write for me.
4. This argument will rely more heavily on your sources, even if you choose to write about yourself. Remember as you research that small connections and threads can often tie ideas together. The entire article does not need to be exactly about the same thing, which is often the downfall of inexperienced researchers. For example, I would not need all my sources to be about the language conflict between being an academic and a friend. That’s pretty specific. So if I broaden it, there are many ways to connect that idea with larger ideas of gender and conflict and borderlands and more.
5. You will be expected to again employ argument strategies as we learned in Unit 1, as well as having a strong intro and conclusion.

# The Keys to Success

Success for this unit relies on two things: depth of critical thinking and following the mediation genre.

As for the mediation genre, you will want to very carefully craft your paper to follow the genre. While good arguments use several strategies to succeed, they also carefully organize their ideas to create an overall effect, and this relies heavily on organizing well. Your vomit draft will get your ideas on the page, but revision will produce a very different draft. Your vomit draft and your second draft should be very different.

As for critical thinking, your mediation will, ultimately, fail if you do not think critically, if you find yourself unable to consider the complexities of the issue you write about. On the other hand, good critical thinking will strengthen your paper in ways you may not even have imagined.

# ORGANIZING BY mediation

Mediation requires you to do three things:

* One, show that you understand multiple perspectives and complexities to an issues. It helps if you don’t think of perspectives as sides, which implies a binary. Instead, imagine a cube or even a dodecahedron (12 sides), or maybe think of a continuum instead.
* Two, organize your ideas clearly for readers to understand.
* Three, this REQUIRES that you think toward levels 3 and 4 of the critical thinking guide in order to succeed. Likely in the past you have written arguments where you perhaps consider other perspectives and then argue for one over the other; mediation, instead, considers other perspectives and then argues for a middle ground.

More details are in a separate handout, but one of the most important organizing principles is knowing the minor points of a major issue. For example, if I am discussing the conflict of speaking like an academic, I need to identify specifically things like grammar choices, correctness, diction, and topic choice. If I talk about my job to my friend Sheila who has a GED but no college education, I need to navigate the words I choose—my diction. Using big words can make me sound pompous and condescending on one hand, yet knowing big words is part of who I am. So I would want to have an extensive discussion of word choice, what it means, and then, eventually, mediate for a happy middle ground. The idea in a nutshell of mediation is this: give your readers all the info to show the complexity while trying to remain neutral, then argue for your perspective that comes from a balance of all perspectives.

# Requirements

* 6 sources total (may include those from the course readings), but this time NONE of these sources may include Wikipedia or dictionaries. If you use these sources, they must be in addition to the other 6.
* 8 pages minimum, double spaced, typed, 12-pt font, TNR equivalent
* A References page in APA
* All sources, linked, attached, or hard-copied for me to see
* Be sure to put your name, the course and my name, the assignment number, and the date in the upper left hand corner.
* You will be graded according to the five criteria: content, purpose, organization, support, and form.